



USDA Forest Service – Northern Region Fire, Aviation and Air Briefing Paper

Issue: Authorization of Approval DNRC Aircraft and Pilots 2010

Background: NASF approved the Interagency Standards for Cooperator Aircraft. This document has standards for equipment and pilot qualifications, maintenance practices etc. as minimums all cooperators must meet to be considered for use on FS fires. This document was submitted to NIAC for acceptance 2 years ago and is just now being approved by federal agencies to be incorporated for 2011. The document can be referenced in an agreement between a Region and their cooperator and recently just approved by the FS nationally.

The recent FS Regional Aviation Officer Approval letter has been issued for 2010. The Montana DNRC Letter authorizes the approved of aircraft airworthiness standards and pilot qualification for use on Forest Service protection. This letter includes requirements for transportation of Forest Service Firefighters/personnel, 5703.4 IHOG Policy for all helicopter operations.

All activity occurring will comply with Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (e.g. staffing), FSM 5700, FSH 5709.16 and the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) Desk Guide and Montana DNRC 1500 Manual, Air Operations.

Operating procedures for initial attack within the above Operating Guides is clear and has been the recent practice using DNRC aircraft. However, it is not defined beyond initial attack and transport of FS firefighters. For example, Mt State wide operating plans current or proposed do not have, process and procedures for aviation assets or protocols.

If action goes beyond initial attack i.e., large fire support; transport of Forest Service personnel is not authorized regardless of protection responsibility. Authorization may be granted by the Regional Aviation Officer on a case by case basis if the transport of Forest Service personnel is critical to an incident and commercial aircraft are not available.

Does this mean on large fires of DNRC protection, authorization to transport USFS personnel in DNRC aircraft is required?

Yes, and authorization would be approved when the information from Appendix Q (7.) Northern Rockies Mob Guide, in the case of a wildfire under the State of Montana protection responsibility, employing FS firefighters, the ordering incident must provide a certified NWCG helicopter manager and module.

Further Questions, Contact: Maggie Doherty Regional Aviation Officer 406-329-4903 or Bob Quirino Helicopter Operations Specialist 406-329-4915.